

Pascoag Utility District

RI Public Water System License #: 1592020

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

Pascoag Utility District found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

This notice is being sent to you by Pascoag Utility District. State Water System ID# 1592020

August 31, 2020

Health Effects of Lead

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. Lead is stored in the bones and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

Sources of lead

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes).

Lead is found in some toys, some playground equipment, and some children's metal jewelry.

Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows pipes, fittings, and fixtures with up to .25 percent weighted average of lead to be identified as "lead-free."

The source of water from the Harrisville Fire District and from Pascoag Utility District Well 5 does not contain lead. When water is in contact with pipes, service lines or plumbing that contains lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1988 are more likely to have lead pipes or lead solder.

EPA estimates that up to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

Don't forget about other sources of lead such as lead paint, lead dust, and lead in soil. Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.

Steps You Can Take To Reduce Your Exposure To Lead In Your Water

1. **Run your water to flush out lead.** Run water for 15-30 seconds to flush lead from interior plumbing. Run water for 5 minutes if you have a lead service line or any lead pipes in your home plumbing or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking, if it hasn't been used for several hours.

2. **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
3. **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
4. **Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 800- NSF-8010 or www.nsf.org for information on performance standards for water filters. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to protect water quality.
5. **Test your water for lead.** Call us at 401-568-6222 to find out how to get your water tested for lead. Pascoag Utility District can schedule a test for you if you would like, and charge only the actual cost from the testing laboratory, or you may contact water testing laboratories directly.
6. **Get your child's blood tested.** Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about exposure.
7. **Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead.** Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law previously allowed end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8 percent lead to be labeled as "lead free." As of January 4, 2014, end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, fittings and valves, must meet the new "lead-free" definition of having no more than 0.25 percent lead on a weighted average. Visit the website at <http://www.nsf.org/newsroom/identifying-lead-free-certification-marks-on-plumbing-products-1> to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures and how to identify lead-free certification marks on new fixtures.

What Happened? What Is Being Done?

Pascoag Utility District ("PUD") performed routine lead and copper testing on ten of its monitoring sites in late June and early July 2020. PUD received the test results from these samples on July 21, and learned that two of the ten sites exceeded the Lead Action Level of 15 parts per billion (PPB). One site tested at 28 PPB and the other at 21 PPB. Both of these homes are considered Tier 1 Lead and Copper Sites, meaning that the service lines to their homes are services consisting of lead pipes. This is likely the cause of the exceedances at these two locations.

PUD has implemented a lead service line replacement program, as lead service lines are often source of lead in drinking water. PUD currently has 13 known customer addresses where lead service lines are in service. PUD is in the process of applying for a grant through a state program that will allow it to replace these remaining service lines at no cost to the customers at these addresses.

PUD has been identifying remaining lead service lines through a survey of each residence and business, and has identified 13 remaining addresses with these lead services. Our customers may call the office to find out if they have a lead service line, and if approved the state grant will allow PUD to replace all remaining known lead service lines at no cost to the customer.

PUD had been in compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule over the last several years, until 2020 testing resulted with two samples exceeding the drinking water limit for lead. PUD has implemented the following system improvements: full restoration of two water storage tanks, installing a SCADA monitoring system to continually monitor water quality, cleaned and lined almost 50% of the water mains, installed a corrosion control injection system, and is replacing known lead service lines.

For More Information

Call us at 401-568-6222. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's ITT-b site at www.epa.gov/lend, call the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD or Safe Drinking Water Act hotline at 1-800-426-4791, or contact your health care provider. Pascoag Utility District, Rhode Island Water System ID# 1592020, August 31, 2020.